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MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

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Letter dated 17 November 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to refer to the letters dated 10 September 1999 (A/53/1050-S/1999/971) and 30 September 1999 (A/54/435-S/1999/1023) addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations.

These ritualistic letters merely obscure the fact that the Government of Lebanon is directly responsible for the volatile situation along its southern border, and that it continues to reject available means for resolving the conflict.

Indeed, even as substantial strides are being made towards reaching a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, Lebanon continues openly to support a terror campaign against a neighbouring state. Furthermore, Lebanon refuses to respond to Israel's repeated invitations to negotiate a solution that would restore peace and security along our common border, particularly the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Over the nearly two years since this invitation was extended, Lebanon has opted, instead, to allow the conflict to continue and the human toll to rise. The perpetuation of the conflict, therefore, is of Lebanon's own making.

I wish to recall the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, providing that sovereignty carries a responsibility not to allow terrorist acts to be organized and prepared on one's territory, or launched from it.

The policies of Lebanon stand in direct conflict with this provision. Groups operating on Lebanese soil openly practice terrorist operations, aimed against the existence of neighbouring Israel, and Lebanon takes no action to

prevent or restrain them. Sheikh Hassan Nassrallah, the Secretary-General of the Lebanon-based Hizballah militia, recently called for "suicide operations" inside Israel, vowing that "this would lead to the expulsion of Jews from Palestine and enable our generations to witness its liberation" (Al-Hayat, London, 30 October 1999). The leader of the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization, which also operates in Lebanon, announced: "This is an open front for the liberation of Palestine, especially as the Israeli enemy occupied part of Lebanese territory, and there is broad scope for resistance that serves the project of Islamic Jihad which seeks to destroy the Zionist entity" (statement by Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, leader of Islamic Jihad, quoted in Al-Hayat, Mideast Mirror, 14 November 1999).

These positions demolish the claims by Lebanese officials that such groups are simply engaged in "resistance" (A/53/878-S/1999/333), and make clear that, in fact, their "resistance" is to the very existence of the State of Israel. Yet, in contradiction of resolution 2625 (XXV) and against international norms, Lebanon does nothing to dismantle or disarm these terrorist organizations. On the contrary - Lebanon's Prime Minister embraces their "jihad" and so-called "resistance" (Voice of Lebanon, 16 February 1999).

This policy conforms with Lebanon's continued rejection of a negotiated solution to the conflict. It should be recalled that the Security Council, in resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978, not only calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces, but also for the restoration of international peace and security and the return of the effective authority of the Government of Lebanon in the area. The declared willingness of the Government of Lebanon to host an elaborate terrorist infrastructure, to permit its regular reinforcement, and to endorse its operations against a neighbouring country, is totally incompatible with the last two provisions of the resolution.

Coupled with its refusal to negotiate a peaceful solution, the policies of Lebanon leave Israel with no alternative but to exercise its sovereign right of self-defence in accordance with international law. Nevertheless, Israel once again calls on the Government of Lebanon to begin negotiating a solution with the aim of restoring peace and security along our common border.

I should be grateful if you will have this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aaron JACOB
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires